

Vincentian Charities



**Newsletter and Chronicle of Activities
BATON ROUGE DIOCESAN COUNCIL
SOCIETY OF ST. VINCENT de PAUL
Special Fall Edition Vol. XX, No. III**

Serving God's Poor in this Community Since 1865



Sweet Dreams

It's hard to believe that this year marks the tenth anniversary of our Sweet Dreams Shelter. How time flies! The Sweet Dreams effort was brought about by individuals in our community working together to make a difference in the lives of homeless women and children. This effort was started by Cary Kearny, with shelter for homeless women and children as its primary objective. Under Cary's leadership, women throughout our community came together, first, to promote the opening of a shelter for homeless women and children and, secondly, to continue that work. Cary is now the Board Chair of our St. Vincent de Paul Charities special works programs.

The anniversary of the official opening of the Sweet Dreams Shelter will be this December. We plan to have a small celebration ceremony, but what we are really celebrating are the lives that have been changed through this program. During the past decade, thousands of women and children have called our shelter home. Sweet Dreams is truly a safety net for women and children who, for whatever reason, become homeless.



With the current economy, the face of homelessness is changing. We are seeing a growing number of women and children, and we are trying to help this most vulnerable population to a better life. Homelessness is a challenge for anyone, but it's an absolute nightmare for women, and even more so for children, which is why this program is called Sweet Dreams.

We ask you to join us in supporting our Bishop Ott Sweet Dreams effort by, first, cutting out the Sweet Dreams Prayer included in this newsletter. Please use this to join us in praying for this vulnerable population. Secondly, if the economy has not created a hardship for your family, please

Continued on page 2; see "Sweet Dreams"

Price LeBlanc Toyota-Lexus St. Vincent de Paul Golf Tournament

We are thrilled to have Price LeBlanc Toyota-Lexus as this year's title sponsor for St. Vincent de Paul's annual golf tournament. This year's tournament is also highlighted by the outstanding support of our honorary chairs: Tommy Martinez (Ascension Parish President); Mayor Kip Holden (East Baton Rouge Parish President); Jay Ourso (Iberville Parish President); Mike Grimmer (Livingston Parish President); and Riley "Pee Wee" Berthelot (West Baton Rouge Parish President). They all join together in inviting you to be a part of this year's tournament.

The tournament will be held on October 31st at the Greystone Golf and Country Club in Denham Springs. We encourage you to consider sponsoring or playing in the tournament. You don't have to be a golfer to help; you can also support this effort by making a contribution. 100% of every contribution will go directly to the good work of St. Vincent de Paul, so please consider supporting this event. Join Price LeBlanc and these outstanding community leaders in making a real difference. See the registration form on page 2 or go online to register at www.svdpbr.org.
Continued on page 2; see "Price LeBlanc Golf Tournament"



The "before" photo of our new Essential Needs Distribution Center. Currently, work is being done to put this building into operation before the end of November. See more details in the story below.

\$50,000 Challenge Grant We Need Your Help!

We continue to move forward in making our vision of a new Essential Needs Distribution Center a reality. We have received a certificate of occupancy from the city-parish, and work has begun on our new facility. We have removed the small amount of asbestos that was in the building and now the roof is being replaced. We hope to be in the new building by the end of November.

This project is important to us because it will allow us to provide for the storage/distribution functions of several critical St. Vincent de Paul programs – our dining room,
Continued on page 2; see "\$50,000 Challenge"

**In this issue – St. Vincent de Paul Continues to Grow
One-Stop Homeless Center to Open**

Sweet Dreams Continued from page 1

consider making a gift to our Sweet Dreams effort by sending a check to P. O. Box 127, Baton Rouge, LA 70821, or going to our website at www.svdpbr.org and making a donation.

On behalf of all the women and children we are blessed to serve, we thank you in advance for anything you are able to do.

Sweet Dreams Prayer

Lord God, Giver of Life,

Fill us with your Spirit.

Use our hands to shelter the homeless;

Use our hearts to enable sweet dreams;

Use our voices to end homelessness.

May our actions improve life for others

And reflect your abundant love.

Through Christ our Lord, A.M.E.N.

Price LeBlanc Golf Tournament Continued from page 1

With the current economic challenges our community faces, St. Vincent de Paul needs your help more than ever. The Parish Presidents who are honorary chairs and the LeBlanc family recognized an opportunity to step forward and support this tournament while encouraging others to get involved. The tournament is a critical effort that will help us to provide food, shelter, school uniforms, prescription medicines and so much more to the needy of our community.

Price LeBlanc Toyota-Lexus

St. Vincent de Paul Golf Tournament

Registration Form (or online at www.svdpbr.org)

- ◆ 10:00 -12:00 p.m. – Lunch for golfers◆ 12:00 p.m. - Tee-off
- ◆ Awards Program and Bar-B-Q Dinner to Follow

Sponsor or Player Name _____

Address _____

Phone Number _____

Sponsorship Levels (Please check all that apply.)

_____ Corporate Sponsorship – \$3000.00

(includes two 4-member teams and top public relations billing)

_____ Associate Sponsorship – \$1000.00

(includes one 4-member team and public relations)

_____ Golf Team & Hole Sponsor – \$600.00

_____ Golf Team – \$500.00

_____ Hole Sponsor – \$125.00

_____ Individual Player – \$125.00

Amount Enclosed _____

I am unable to play, but want to contribute \$_____ to the event.

Please make check payable to St. Vincent de Paul and mail with this form to: P. O. Box 127, Baton Rouge, LA 70821

\$50,000 Challenge Grant Continued from page 1

shelters and thrift stores. This new facility will also put us in a much better position to deal with possible disasters in the future. The total project cost of this new warehouse/distribution center, including purchase price and

renovations, is \$460,000. We have received a wonderful challenge grant of \$50,000 from the Huey & Angelina Wilson Foundation, and we are aggressively pursuing matching contributions. Right now, if you make an investment in the Essential Needs Warehouse, it will be doubled, up to \$50,000.

The Wilson Foundation's purpose in granting this generous gift is to encourage others to get behind this project. In order to avoid any interruption in services and to ensure that we could meet our goals, we took out some short-term financing. We need the help of everyone in our community to step up and help us to meet this generous challenge grant.

If you are interested in helping with this project or if you would like to see the North St. Distribution Center site, please feel free to call Michael Acaldo at 383-7837, extension 0, or send an email to Michael at macaldo@svdpbr.com. Or simply make out a check to St. Vincent de Paul Essential Needs Distribution Center and send it to P. O. Box 127, Baton Rouge, LA 70821. Any amount would be greatly appreciated.



From left to right, Diane Bezdek, long-time SVDP leader and volunteer; Michael Acaldo; Marti Didier, President of Altrusa; and Constable Reginald Brown pose for a photo at a special Freedom Celebration held at the St. Vincent de Paul Dining Room.

Freedom – A Special Celebration

On September 11, 2011, people across the nation observed the tenth anniversary of the terrorist attacks on our country. To honor those who died on that tragic day, as well as all of our military who risk their lives to ensure our freedom, a special flag ceremony was held at our Dining Room.

The St. Vincent de Paul Dining Room opens its doors every day to hundreds of people. We are truly our community's safety net, serving more meals than all the other community kitchens combined. When Constable Reginald Brown and Marti Didier of the Altrusa Club asked if we would like an American flag for our Dining Room, of course, we said "yes." The flag that was presented to St. Vincent de Paul on September 11th had flown over the United States Capitol, which made this gift even more special.

What an awesome thing it is to be an American. Our country is not perfect, but it's still the greatest nation on earth. We want to thank Constable Reginald Brown and the Altrusa Club of Baton Rouge for this symbol of everything that is good about our country and its people.



Attorney General Buddy Caldwell presents Michael Acaldo a grant check for our community pharmacy. The grant comes from proceeds of a settlement with a pharmaceutical company that had overcharged for their products in Louisiana. These dollars come at a critical time, and will help us continue our work at the pharmacy.

St. Vincent de Paul – a Great Investment

Obviously, the opportunity to see Christ in each person we serve is a remarkable blessing, but another thing we love about St. Vincent de Paul is the people who are such an integral part of our mission and ministry. They come together to make an investment, in every sense of the word, that will make our world a better place. What better investment is there than putting your support (prayer, volunteer and financial) behind an organization that makes a difference in the lives of those in need? From the ROI (return on investment) perspective, the rewards are truly out of this world.

Every day, we encounter people who are volunteering their time, or giving, or doing something for St. Vincent de Paul. It's really remarkable. If you are reading this newsletter, then you are one of those people who have done something for others, and we thank you.

Our supporters feel that giving to others is a blessing, not an obligation. On behalf of the needy we serve, we want to express our heartfelt gratitude to everyone who supports our work. May your generosity be returned many times over.

--Special Thanks from our St. Vincent de Paul Leadership

Ensure that your values and beliefs live forever by remembering the Society of St. Vincent de Paul in your will.



The new One-Stop Center for the Homeless is ready for opening. This new collaborative effort will help so many homeless individuals.

One-Stop for the Homeless Center – a Community Collaboration

As reported in previous newsletters, the Capital Area Alliance for the Homeless, in collaboration with the Society of St. Vincent de Paul and homeless providers throughout our community, will soon open a new One-Stop Center for the Homeless. This center is located on Convention St. across from St. Vincent de Paul's main charitable campus. It will provide a place where homeless people – men, women and children – can go to get the assistance they need. They may need assistance from Volunteers of America or may require mental health counseling. They may need to go the homeless healthcare clinic or they may need substance abuse counseling. Those services, and many others, will be available at the One-Stop Center so that homeless individuals can get everything they need at one place.

Because the One-Stop is strategically located right across the street from the St. Vincent de Paul campus where so many services are offered, this site is the perfect location. St. Vincent de Paul looks forward to working together with the Capital Area Alliance for the Homeless and all the other homeless providers in our community to make a difference in the lives of homeless men, women and children.



Florida Blvd. property acquisition expands St. Vincent de Paul charitable campus. See details in the story below.

St. Vincent de Paul Continues to Grow

Have you noticed the new corner of our St. Vincent de Paul main charitable campus? Doesn't it look great? You can see in the photo above that the old check-cashing building on the corner of Florida Blvd. and N. 17th St. has been demolished and a new parking lot put there that will benefit all the works of St. Vincent de Paul.

When this property came on the market, we had to move quickly, and we obtained some short-term financing in order to make this acquisition possible. Anyone that would like to help us pay off this loan can do so by contacting Michael Acaldo at 383-7837, extension O, or by sending your gift to St. Vincent de Paul at P. O. Box 127, Baton Rouge, LA 70821.

Every new program, property acquisition, expansion of services – everything we do – is accomplished because of the generosity of our supporters. Thank you!

A Story I Just Have to Share

During my 22 years at St. Vincent de Paul, it has been a blessing to meet so many wonderful people and to witness the growth of our organization. Many of the people I've met, and their needs, have led to the creation of programs that continue to touch and transform lives every day.

Recently, as I was walking from my car into St. Vincent de Paul, I saw a young lady in front of the building and asked how I might be of assistance. She had a prescription she needed to get filled, and I directed her to our pharmacy on the corner of N. 17th St. From the corner of my eye, I saw an older woman approach us, and wait patiently until we had finished our conversation. When I turned toward her and asked if I could help in some way, she said, "You're not going to believe this." She proceeded to tell me her story – a tale that exemplifies what giving is all about.

Back in February, she had been diagnosed with cancer, and the prognosis was grim. Her doctors didn't give her long to live so she donated everything she owned to St. Vincent de Paul so that we could help someone in need. "But now," she told me with a big smile, "I'm in remission. I'm feeling great, and I'm ready to get on with my life."

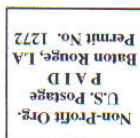
She said she didn't want a hand-out and could make it on her small, fixed income if we could just help her obtain basic necessities like a bed, sofa and table to set up her apartment again. As we spoke, I noticed that she was saying a silent prayer, her fingers moving constantly across a set of rosary beads. Without being told, I knew she was praying that we could help her in her time of need.

Just then, an older man walked toward us. He was a friend of hers and corroborated everything she had told me. Although we no longer had the furniture and household items she had donated to St. Vincent de Paul, I assured her that I would call the Director of our Stores Program to make sure we provided everything she needed, and we did.

Later, I had an opportunity to talk over the phone with this special woman, who will remain anonymous, and in that conversation, I learned how old she was. I would have guessed her age to be between 70 and 75, but I learned that she was actually 90 years old. 90 years old and so grateful for a chance to start over! What a powerful story of giving and gratitude.

We want to thank each and every one of you for your support of our work and ministry. I also hope that this 90-year-old supporter sees this article and realizes how grateful I am to have met her. She is truly one of life's many blessings.

-- **Michael J. Acaldo**, *President & CEO, St. Vincent de Paul Charities*



Address Service Requested

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